


A Case for the Trinity

The Bible is God's Word to us. In it, God tells us about Himself in terms that we, as human beings can understand.

As with the Bodily Resurrection of Christ, Salvation by Grace through Faith, the Authority of Scripture, and the Deity of Jesus Christ, the Trinity is an essential Christian doctrine. There is no middle ground since it is clearly laid out in Scripture that this is the true nature of God.

We need to understand the Biblical Trinity because it is *who* God is. When we understand the Trinity, we understand that God has revealed Himself to us in a way that we may worship Him "in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)

Jesus Christ says in John 17:3, "And this is eternal life, *that they may know You*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." (emphasis added)

Since we know that all Scripture comes from God (2 Timothy 3:16-17), that God doesn't lie (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; John 17:17), that we are to worship Him "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24), and since Jesus prayed that we would "know the only true God" (John 17:3), we would expect to find the concept of the Trinity within the pages of the Bible. 

Saint Thomas Aquinas (AD 1225 - 1274), said about the Trinity:

- "When we speak of the Trinity, we must do so with caution and modesty, for, as St. Augustine saith, 'Nowhere else are more dangerous errors made, or is research more difficult, or discovery more fruitful.'"¹

Before we get into the Biblical definition of the Trinity and show, using Scripture, that it is indeed the true nature of God, let's take a look at what some of the cults and some major world religions teach about the Trinity.

Jehovah's Witnesses teach that:²

- "sincere persons who want to know the true God and serve him find it a bit difficult to love and worship a complicated, *freakish looking, three-headed God*."
- "Never was there a more deceptive doctrine advanced than that of the trinity."
- "Another lie made and told by Satan for the purpose of reproaching God's name and turning away from God is that of the 'trinity.'"

The *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, commonly referred to as *Mormonism*, rejects the Biblical teaching of the Trinity and teaches that:

- The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three separate Gods, what is called tri-theism.
- And actually, Mormons are polytheists since they believe in many Gods as seen in the following quotes:³
 - "As pertaining to this universe, there are three Gods: the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."
 - "To us, speaking in the proper finite sense, these three are the only Gods we worship. But in addition there is an infinite number of holy personages, drawn from worlds without number, who have passed on to exaltation and are thus gods."

Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy in her book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, the primary Christian Science work said to be a companion of the Bible, says:⁴

- "The theory of three persons in one God (that is, a personal Trinity or Tri-unity) suggests polytheism, rather than the one ever-present I AM.
- "The name Elohim is in the plural, but this plurality of Spirit does not imply more than one God, nor does it imply three persons."

Islam rejects the teaching of the Trinity as the Qur'an states:

- "Say not 'Trinity': desist: it will be better for you: for God is one God: Glory be to Him: (far exalted is He) above having a son." (Sura 4:171)
- A Qur'an commentary on this verse says, "The doctrine of the Trinity is plainly rejected here. There are not three persons in Godhead, but only one: *Allah is only one God*. The Holy Qur'an nowhere says that the Christian Trinity is formed of Jesus, Mary, and God..."⁵

On this we can agree with the teaching of Islam since we too reject that the Trinity is Jesus, Mary and God.

Muhammad had a very misunderstood view of several Christian doctrines, the Trinity being only one.

The Way International founder Victor Paul Wierwille also denies the Trinity as seen in the following quote:

- "Through the years, the more and more I carefully researched God's Word for knowledge, the less and less I found to substantiate a trinity...So how then did a trinitarian doctrine come about? It gradually evolved and gained momentum in late 1st, 2nd, and 3rd centuries as pagans, who had converted to Christianity, brought to Christianity some of their pagan beliefs and practices. Trinitarianism then was confirmed at Nicaea in 325 by Church bishops out of political expediency."⁶

As we will show, this statement by Mr. Wierwille is of course false. Although the word Trinity wasn't used until AD 168 by Theophilus, the sixth bishop of Antioch, Syria, the early church recognized the concept of one God in three persons.

Now, as for "pagan beliefs and practices" being the cause or the momentum shift of the Trinity being taught in the early church, here's what Dr. Walter Martin had to say on the subject:

- "All we ask you to understand is that Trinitarian theology was not derived from pagan sources. It was derived from biblical passages where honest, godly men said, 'Hey, 2 Peter says there is a Person

called the Father, and he's God. And Acts chapter 5 says there is a Person called the Spirit, and he's God. And John 1 says there's a Person called the Word and he's God.' You've got Three Persons, and Deuteronomy 6 says, 'There is only one God.' Logical conclusion: the Three Persons, somehow, are the One God. That's how Trinitarian theology started. Not with the pagans."⁷

The Trinity Defined

The word *Trinity* simply means *tri-unity* or *three-in-oneness*.

With that being said, we can define the Trinity as:

- "Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."⁸

While this statement embodies the definition of the Trinity, it's the Bible that lays it out for us.


First, realize that the doctrine rests completely upon the truth of the first clause: there is only one God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 makes that perfectly clear "Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

This prayer, the *Shema*, taken from the Hebrew word "to hear", was the prayer each morning of the faithful Jew and defined his faith and provided the foundation of his religion.

Other verses also attest to the fact that there is only one God:

- 2 Samuel 7:22 says, "Therefore You are great, O LORD God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears."

- 1 Kings 8:60 says, "...that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other."
- 1 Chronicles 17:20 says, "O LORD, there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears."
- Isaiah 37:16 says, "O LORD of hosts...You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth."
- See also Isaiah 44:6-8; 45:14 and Jeremiah 10:6-7. 

Second, the definition insists that there are three divine persons. Please note that we are not saying there are three beings that are one being, or three persons that are one person. The second clause speaks of three divine persons, not three divine Beings.

We need to realize that we're talking about one *what* and three *who's*. The one *what* is the Being or essence of God; the three *who's* are the Father, Son, and Spirit.

And thirdly, we are told that the *relationship* among these divine persons is eternal.

When we speak of *relationship*, we are speaking of three individual, separate and eternally distinct persons who relate to each other personally. In other words,

- The Father sends the Son. (Galatians 4:4; 1 John 4:14)
- The Father sends the Holy Spirit. (John 14:26; Galatians 4:6)
- The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father. (John 3:35; 5:20; 14:31)
- The Father and Son glorify each other. (John 17:1,4,5)
- The Holy Spirit glorifies the Son. (John 16:14)

The Father is eternal:

- Romans 16:26-27 says, "but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God..."

The Son is eternal:

- John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
- The *New English Bible* puts it very appropriately, "When all things began, the Word already was."
- John 17:5 says, "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."

The Holy Spirit is eternal:

- Hebrews 9:14 says, "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God..."

Again, the Trinity is defined as three separate, distinct, and eternal individuals or persons and yet, one God.

The three foundations of the Trinity then now are visible:

- Foundation One: Monotheism: There is Only One God
- Foundation Two: There Are Three Divine Persons
- Foundation Three: The Persons Are Coequal and Coeternal

Functional Order of the Trinity

All members of the Trinity are equal in essence or nature, that is, all members are God.

The Father is 100% God, the Son is 100% God and the Holy Spirit is 100% God.

With that said, there are different functions within the Trinity:

- The Function of the Father:
 - The Father is the "Source, Sender, and Planner of salvation."⁹

He is the Creator, the Source of all things (Genesis 1:1)
He sent His only-begotten, His unique Son (John 3:16)
He is the Planner of salvation (Ephesians 2:8,9; Matthew 10:32)

- The Function of the Son:
 - The Son is the one that was sent to die and achieve salvation for those who are His.

He was sent by the Father (John 20:21)
He seeks those who are lost (Luke 19:9,10)
His purpose was to die for you and me (John 12:27)

- The Function of the Holy Spirit:
 - The Holy Spirit is the *executor* of the plans of God. In other words, He is the one who carries out Gods purposes and plans.

He guides to truth (John 16:13)
He reveals Jesus to us (John 16:14)
He comforts (John 14:16)
He gives us wisdom (Ephesians 1:17)
He prays for believers (Romans 8:27)
He gives believers power (Acts 1:8)
Helps us in our weaknesses (Romans 8:26)
Gives believers spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11)
Gives us spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22-23)

It is important to remember that "*difference in function does not indicate inferiority in nature.*"¹⁰

Because the Son has a different *function* than the Father or the Holy Spirit has a different *function* than the Son does not mean that they are any less God than the others of the Trinity.

In summary, the Father "is the planner and the source, the Son is the accomplisher and the means and the Holy Spirit is the applier and effecter of salvation to believers."¹¹

Now, when talking to someone about the Trinity, it will undoubtedly be brought up that the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible. That's OK, the word "Bible" isn't in the Bible either or the word "Theocracy" but what is there, are the concepts.

If you find it hard to understand the concept of the Trinity, welcome to the club. Our limited human understanding makes it a difficult concept. We can apprehend the concept of the Trinity even though we may not fully comprehend the concept of the Trinity.

Basically, human beings cannot possibly or fully understand everything there is to know about the incomprehensible God.

- Job 11:7 says, "Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?"
- Psalm 139:6 says, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it."
- Isaiah 55:8-9 says, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the LORD. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.'"
- Romans 11:33 says, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out!"
- 1 Corinthians 13:12 says, "Now we see but a poor reflection; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

We must accept that the finite mind cannot fully understand the infinite. If we could wrap our minds around God, it would show either that God was no god or we have invented a god that only our minds could comprehend. The concept of the Trinity actually argues for the existence of God.

Now that we've defined our terms, let's see what the Trinity is not and then move on to what the Bible has to say about the Trinity.

What the Trinity is not...

The Father is *not* 1/3 of God, the Son 1/3 of God and the Spirit 1/3 of God. Each is fully God, coequal and coeternal with the others.

The Trinity is *not* Polytheistic (many Gods) as is common in Mormonism.

The Trinity is *not* Modalistic (one God in different modes) also known as "Jesus Only" and "Oneness Pentecostalism".

The Trinity is *not* Pantheistic (God is all and all is God) as is common in Hinduism.

The Trinity is *not* three Gods ($1+1+1=3$) but one God ($1\times1\times1=1$).

The Trinity in the Old Testament

As mentioned above, Deuteronomy 6:4 or the *Shema* was the prayer each morning of the faithful Jew and defined his faith and provided the foundation of his religion.


Deuteronomy 6:4 says, "Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

There are nine different words in Hebrew used to represent "one."

What's interesting is the word used in the *Shema*, in Hebrew is *echad*.

This word means “united, alike, alone, altogether” but it also speaks of “compound oneness in which a number of things together are described as “one.”¹²

Dr. Robert Morey describes other uses of the word אֶחָד or *echad* as used in the Old Testament:

1. Gen. 1:5: The יוֹם אֶחָד (first day) is a combination of two things – the evening and the morning.
2. Gen. 2:24: Adam and Eve became לֶכְשֶׁד אֶחָד (one flesh). They were one, but two and two, but one.
3. Gen. 3:22: Adam and Eve became אֶחָד (one) with God. But they did not lose their personhood when they became “one” with God.
4. Gen. 11:6: The people were אֶחָד (one). They were, thus, “one” and “many” at the same time.
5. See also Gen. 34:16, 22; 2 Chron. 30:12; Ezra 2:64; Jer. 32:39 

We can see that in the *Shema* the multi-personal nature of God is established. We see “unity” which literally means “oneness.”

The Plural Pronouns

Plural pronouns are words such as “Us”, “We”, and “Our.” When we look in the Old Testament, we would expect a Trinitarian God to speak of Himself in such a manner.

- Genesis 1:26-27 says, “Then God said, ‘Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, according to *Our* likeness...So God created man in *His own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (emphasis added)
- Genesis 3:22 says, “Then God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of *Us*...”
- Genesis 11:7-9 says, “‘Come, let *Us* go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.’”

Much has been said that when God uses plural pronouns, that it's nothing more than "plural of majesty" language, much like Victoria, the Queen of England, reportedly stating "We are not amused."

This can be no further from the truth since this is a recent grammatical invention that cannot be read back into ancient documents.

Rabbi Tzvi Nassi, professor at Oxford University comments:

- "Everyone who is acquainted with the rudiments of the Hebrew and Chaldee languages must know that God, in the holy Writings, very often spoke of Himself in the plural. The passages are numerous...Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, David, and all the other kings throughout (the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa) speak in the singular, and not as modern kings in the plural. They do not say *we*, but *I*, command; as in Gen. 41:41; Dan. 3:29; Ezra. 1:2."¹³

The Plural Persons

Plural persons are those times, in Scripture, when God refers to one of the other Persons of the Trinity as God. When we look in the Old Testament, we would expect a Trinitarian God to speak in such a manner.

Genesis 19:24 says, "Then the LORD [Yahweh] rained down brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD [Yahweh] out of the heavens."

In fact, the early church recognized that this verse referred to Jesus [Yahweh] calling down fire from God the Father [Yahweh] from heaven.

For example, the *Council of Sirmium* (AD 347-359) stated, "the Son of God brought down the rain from God the Father."¹⁴

The German reformer, Martin Luther (1483-1546) commented:

- "We may note also the fact that Moses here says that the Lord (Jehovah) rained fire and brimstone from the Lord (Jehovah). This

mode of speaking greatly irks the Jews and they try in vain to explain it. But Moses mentions Jehovah twice to show that there is but one God, but that in this one God there are three distinct persons.”¹⁵

And Dr. Henry M. Morris (1918-2006), founder of *Creation Research Society* says:

- “This verse seems to note that two persons of the Godhead were participating. “The LORD” (evidently the one manifested to Abraham) called down the judgment, but it came from “the LORD” out of heaven.”¹⁶

Another example of the *Plural Persons* is found in Psalm 45:6, 7:

- “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom...Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You...”
- Hebrews 1:8, 9 uses this verse in reference to Christ’s exaltation and dominion. In this verse, the Father acknowledges God the Son by the Father’s own testimony.

The Theophanies

Theophany comes from the two Greek words *theo* (God) and *phainein* (to show forth) and it means “the appearance of God to man in human form.”

If God took on the flesh of a human and talked, walked, conversed and fellowshiped with other people. This would establish a precedent to the coming of Jesus in the flesh or His Incarnation in the New Testament.

As Trinitarians, we would not find this to be an issue as it provides further evidence for the Trinitarian position.

Theophanies are further proof that God is Triune in nature since this is the only way to explain the following verse in the New Testament.

- John 1:18 says, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."

And yet, we have verses in the Old Testament that demonstrate that men have laid eyes upon God. How can this be?


Understand that when the Bible mentions God, it can mean God the Father, God the Son or God the Holy Spirit so the only way John 1:18 could be read is that "No one had seen God [the Father] at any time."

Let's take a look at some Old Testament Theophanies in which "God the Son" appeared to man.

In all the instances, *appeared* [Hebrew: ra'ah] means "a literal manifestation or appearance that was seen with the physical eye."

Dr. Robert Morey says, "It [is] not a vision within the head, but a literal appearance before the eyes...The word רָאָה [ra'ah] is the normal Hebrew word to describe what is exposed to the eye of man."¹⁷

- Genesis 12:7 says, "Then the LORD [Yahweh] *appeared* to Abram and said, 'To your descendents I will give this land.' And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had *appeared* to him."
- Genesis 18:1 says, "Then the LORD [Yahweh] *appeared* to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre."
- Genesis 26:2 says, "Then the LORD [Yahweh] *appeared* to him and said, 'Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land which I shall tell you.'"
- Genesis 26:24 says, "And the LORD [Yahweh] *appeared* to him the same night..."
- Genesis 35:1 says, "Then God said to Jacob, 'Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who *appeared* to you...'"
- Genesis 35:9 says, "Then God *appeared* to Jacob again..."

- See also, Gen. 48:3; Ex. 3:16, 4:5, 6:3; Lev. 9:4, 16:2; Deut. 31:15; 1 Sam. 3:21; 1 Kings 3:5, 9:2, 11:9, 2 Chron. 3:1, 7:12. 

Because Theophanies are abundant in the Old Testament they are one of the best ways to demonstrate the multi-personal nature of God as He defines himself in the Old Testament.

God the Father

Since the doctrine of the Trinity starts with the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, we would expect to find verses in the Old Testament that call Yahweh, the Father.

These verses refer to a personal being that is not an “it” or a “thing” or an “impersonal force” but an actual personal being that has emotion, talks, thinks, acts, hears prayer and can and does respond to prayer.

The following verses demonstrate that the Father is God:

- Deuteronomy 32:6 says, “Do you thus deal with *Yahweh...Is He not your Father*, who bought you? (emphasis added)
- Isaiah 63:15-16 says, “Look down from heaven...Doubtless You are our Father, though Abraham was ignorant of us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. *You, O Yahweh, are our Father*; our redeemer from Everlasting is Your name.” (emphasis added)
 - Here is a clear indication of the personhood of God the Father. An impersonal being could not look down and see or have zeal and strength. Isaiah is clearly praying to a Personal God who he expects to answer his prayer.
- Isaiah 64:8 says, “But now, *O Yahweh, You are our Father*; we are the clay, and You our potter.” (emphasis added)
- Malachi 2:10 says, “*Have we not all one Father?* Has not one God created us?” (emphasis added)

- The above verse is what is referred to as *Hebrew Parallelism*. The idea is said once and then repeated a second time with different wording.

"The one Father, (it appears from the parallel), is manifestly Almighty God, as the Jews said to our Lord, "We have one Father, even God."¹⁸

As seen in the verses above, as Trinitarians, we are not surprised to find that in the Scriptures, the Father is called God.

God the Son

The second person of the Trinity is God the Son and as with God the Father, we would expect to find Old Testament passages showing that God the Son has personhood and is called God.

- Proverbs 30:4 says, "Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, *and what is His son's name*, if you know?"
- "The question, **What is His name?** asks what His true character is like. The inquiry, What is **the name of His son?** Suggests the question, "Has He imparted His nature or attributes to any other who may in any sense be called His 'Son'?"¹⁹
- Isaiah 7:14 says, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."
- This verse is used in Matthew 1:23 which says, "'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us.'"
- Isaiah 9:6 says, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, *Mighty God*, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (emphasis added)

These and other verses in the Old Testament are Messianic prophecies that foretell the “Son of God” who will appear and who is God Incarnate.

As a Trinitarian, we would expect to see these glimpses and fore shadowing of Jesus Christ to come.

Jesus is revealed in the Old Testament as a person, a child that will be born and again not as an impersonal force. He is shown as ‘God with us’ and not a created being.

God the Holy Spirit

Again, if the Trinitarian position is true, we would expect to find verses in the Old Testament that demonstrate that the Holy Spirit has attributes of deity, that He is not an impersonal force like “electricity” but a personal being, the third Person of the Trinity.

When we look in the Old Testament, we find that there are approximately 62 verses that point to the Holy Spirit as God.

Dr. Robert Morey says:

- “There are actually more references to the Spirit in the Old Testament than all references to the Father and the Son combined.”²⁰

Let’s take a look at some verses that demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is indeed God and has personal attributes that only a person can have:

- Isaiah 63:10 says, “But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, He fought against them.”
 - Notice here that “His Holy Spirit” *grieved* [Hebrew: *atsab*] and it means “worry, pain, displeasure, hurt or be sorry.” Only a person can be grieved – not an impersonal force.

- The same word is used of David in 2 Samuel 19:1-2 when he found out his son Absalom was dead.
- And the same word is used of God in Genesis 6:6 when we are told that "He was *grieved* in His heart."
- Micah 2:7 says, "Is it being said, O house of Jacob: 'Is the Spirit of the LORD impatient? Are these His doings?'" NASB
 - So, the question that is being asked here is if the "Spirit of the LORD" can become impatient or angry. The Jews believed that the Spirit was a Person that could become annoyed at the sin of man.
- 1 Kings 22:24 says, "Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, 'How did the Spirit of Yahweh pass from me to speak to you?'" NASB
 - Here we're told that the "Spirit of the LORD" speaks.
- 2 Samuel 23:2 says, "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue."
 - Here we see that the "Sprit of the LORD" is speaking and of course, only a Person, with consciousness, can speak.
- Nehemiah 9:30-31 says, "Yet for many years You had patience with them, and *testified* against them by Your Spirit in your prophets...For you are God." (emphasis added)
 - Again we see that the Holy Spirit has traits of personhood since only a person can testify.
- Psalm 139:7 says, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?"
 - Here we see that the Spirit of God is *omnipresent* or everywhere present at the same time – obviously only God is omnipresent.

When we look at the whole panoply of Scripture, we can see that Gods Triune nature can be seen in the **Plural Pronouns**, the **Plural Persons**, the **Theophanies**, and in the descriptions and attributes of **God the Father**, **God the Son**, and **God the Holy Spirit**.

It's rather obvious when we take Old Testament Scripture as a whole and not out of context that God is Triune in nature and that is how He has revealed Himself to us.

The Trinity in the New Testament

Just as with the Old Testament, we would expect to see verses in the New Testament that point out that the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit have attributes that only a person can have.

Obviously a "non-personal force" could not be called God, just as a carved wooden idol could not rightly be called God.

Remember the definition of the Trinity that we gave earlier:

- "Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal *persons*, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."²¹ (emphasis added)

God the Father

It's very much assumed that there is a Person called the "Father" who is called God in the Scriptures. In other words, Trinitarians spend little time talking about the personhood of God the Father because it's pretty much a given.

We know that the Father is a person due to the fact that He does things and says things that only a Person can say.

- He knows (Matthew 6:8, 32)
- He speaks (Matthew 3:17)
- He sees (Matthew 6:4,6)
- He loves (1 John 3:1)
- He wills (Matthew 7:21)
- He sends (1 John 4:14)

As Trinitarians, we are not surprised to find that the Father is referred to in Scripture as "He," "His," and "Him"

- Matthew 5:45 says, "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for *He* makes *His* sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (emphasis added)

One of the best verses that demonstrate the personhood of the Father can be found in 1 John 1:3:

- "that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."
- The word *fellowship* [Greek: *koinonia*], means "to communicate, communication, participation or social intercourse."
- Notice that *fellowship* is used with other believers, with God the Father and with Jesus Christ His Son. In other words, *fellowship* is used in reference to persons.

So, not only do we know that the Father is a Person with personality based on the previous verses, but also that the Father is God with attributes that only deity would have.

- He is omnipotent (Matthew 19:26; Revelation 19:6)
- He is omniscient (Psalm 147:5; Hebrews 4:13)
- He is omnipresent (1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23, 24)
- He is eternal (Genesis 21:33; Isaiah 40:28)
- He is holy (Psalm 99:5, 9; 1 Peter 1:15)
- He is the creator (Genesis 1:1; Psalms 102:24, 25)

So now that we've demonstrated that the Father has personhood and attributes of deity, let's take a look at some verses that point to the fact that the Father is considered God by the writers of the New Testament.

- 1 Corinthians 8:6 says, "yet there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things..."

- Paul starts off saying, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father..." in 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2 as well as others.
- Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..."
- Ephesians 4:6 says, "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Bottom line, we see that the Father is a Person, that He has attributes of deity and the Scriptures call Him God.

God the Son

Just as with the Father, we expect to find in the New Testament that Jesus has attributes of personhood by the things that He does and the things that He says.

In other words, if Jesus were a metaphor for a "force" or "a non-personal energy substance," we would not find attributes that only a person can have assigned to Him.

But, we find just the opposite as a Trinitarian would expect to find. For example we read that:

- He knows (John 2:24)
- He speaks (Matthew 5:1)
- He sees (John 1:48)
- He loves (Mark 10:21)
- He wills (Matthew 26:39)
- He sends (John 10:21)

Just as with God the Father, we expect to find references to Jesus where He is referred to with personal pronouns such as "He," "Him," and "His."

- Matthew 1:21 says, "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call *His* name Jesus, for *He* will save *His* people from their sins." (emphasis added)
- John the Baptist says in John 1:30, 31, "'This is *He* of whom I said, 'After comes a Man who is preferred before me, for *He* was before me.' I did not know *Him*; but that *He* should be revealed to Israel.'"

Just as with God the Father, Jesus has personhood and the Bible clearly demonstrates that He has attributes only deity could possess.

- He is omnipotent (Colossians 2:10; 1 Peter 3:22)
- He is omniscient (John 16:30; 21:17)
- He is omnipresent (Matthew 18:20; 2 Corinthians 13:5)
- He is eternal (John 1:1; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 13:8)
- He is holy (Hebrews 7:26; Revelation 3:7)
- He is the creator (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16)

Now that we've demonstrated that Jesus has personhood and attributes of deity, let's take a look at some verses that point to the fact that Jesus was considered God by the writers of the New Testament.

- John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
- John 20:28 says that when Thomas saw the risen Lord Jesus and the wounds in His hands, feet, and side, he said, "My Lord and my God!"
 - In the Greek, John 20:28 literally reads, "The Lord of me and the God of me"
 - If Thomas had said the equivalent of "Oh, My God", Jesus would have rebuked him for taking God's name in vain but instead, Jesus commended Thomas - "Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'"

- 2 Peter 1:1 says, "To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of *our God and Savior Jesus Christ*." (emphasis added)
 - The Greek literally reads, "having faith in righteousness of the God of us and Savior Jesus Christ."
 - With the use of such verbiage (i.e., "the God...and Savior") we can apply what is called the *Granville Sharp* rule.

Simply stated, the *Granville Sharp* rule says, "that when two nouns of the same case are separated by the word "and" [Greek: kai], with the first noun having the article [the] in front of it, but the second noun without the article [the], only one person is in view and is, thus, being described by both nouns."²²

- Titus 2:13 says, "Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our *great God and Savior Jesus Christ*." (emphasis added)
 - The Greek literally reads, "expecting the blessed hope and appearance of the glory of the great God and Savior of us Jesus Christ."
 - Again, when applying the *Granville Sharp* rule, we can clearly see that Jesus Christ is being called God.
- For a more detailed and in-depth study on the deity of Jesus Christ, please refer to *The Deity of Jesus Christ* apologetics teaching that is posted on the Calvary Aurora website at:

<http://www.calvaryaurora.org/custom.asp?P=278>

Bottom line, we see that Jesus is a Person, that He has attributes only deity can have and the Scriptures call Him God.

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is accused of being a "non-personal force" or "similar to electricity" more often than God the Father or Jesus Christ.

This is, of course, the erroneous belief of the *Jehovah's Witnesses*.

- The *Watchtower* publication *Reasoning from the Scriptures* argues that the Holy Spirit "is not a person but is a powerful force that God causes to emanate from himself to accomplish his holy will."²³
- The *Watchtower* publication *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* says that to a certain extent, the Holy Spirit can be likened to electricity, "a force that can be adapted to perform a great variety of operations."²⁴

But, just as with the other two members of the Godhead, we expect to find that the Holy Spirit has attributes of Personhood by the things that He does and the things that He says.

- He hears (John 16:13)
- He searches all things (1 Corinthians 2:10)
- He speaks (Mark 13:11)
- He teaches (John 15:26)
- He comforts (John 16:7)
- He guides (John 16:13)
- He reveals (John 16:14)
- He forbids (Acts 16:6, 7)

Just as we did with the Father and Jesus Christ, the Trinitarian position is that we expect to see that the Bible uses personal pronouns such as "He," "His," and "Him" when referring to the Holy Spirit.

- John 15:26 says, "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, *He* will testify of Me." (emphasis added)
- John 16:7 says, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send *Him* to you." (emphasis added)
- John 16:13 says, "However, when *He*, the Spirit of truth, has come, *He* will guide you into all truth; for *He* will not speak on *His* own authority, but whatever *He* hears *He* will speak; and *He* will tell you things to come." (emphasis added)

Also, it can be demonstrated that the Holy Spirit has Personhood by the fact that He has emotions:


- He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30)
- He can be made to feel good (Acts 15:28)
- He can be lied to (Acts 5:3)
- He can be sinned against (Matthew 12:31)
- He can be resisted (Acts 7:51)
- He can be insulted (Hebrews 10:29)

Just as with God the Father and God the Son, the Bible clearly demonstrates that God the Holy Spirit has attributes only deity could possess.

- He is omnipotent (Luke 1:35)
- He is omniscient (John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 11)
- He is omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10)
- He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14)
- He is holy (Romans 1:4)
- He is the creator (Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4)

So, now that we have demonstrated that the Holy Spirit is a Person and not a "non-personal force," let's take a look at some verses that specifically call the Holy Spirit God.

- Acts 5:3, 4 says, "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...You have not lied to men but to God.'"
- This verse equates the Holy Spirit to God.
- Dr. John MacArthur points out that "This passage teaches two vitally important truths about the Holy Spirit. First, it affirms that He is a person, not an influence or impersonal force, since He can be lied to. Second, verse 3 says Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, while verse 4 says that he lied to God, a clear affirmation of the deity of the Holy Spirit."²⁵
- Acts 5:9 says, "Then Peter said to her, 'How is it that you have agreed together to test the *Spirit of the Lord*?' (emphasis added)"

- In Acts 28:25-27, Paul says, "So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: '*The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers saying...*'" (emphasis added)
 - Paul is quoting from Isaiah 6:8-10, in which it was the "*voice of the Lord, saying...*" 
- In Hebrews 10:15-17, the writer says, "But the *Holy Spirit* also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them...*says the LORD*: I will put My laws into their hearts...' *then He adds*, 'Their sins and lawless deeds I will remember no more.'" (emphasis added)
 - But the writer is quoting from Jeremiah 31:31-34, in which it is the LORD who is speaking.
- 2 Corinthians 3:16, 17 says, "Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the *Lord is the Spirit*; and where the *Spirit of the Lord* is, there is liberty."
 - "The Lord" in verse 16 is "the LORD [Yahweh]" of the Old Testament verse (Exodus 34:34) Paul was quoting from.

Bottom line, we see that the Holy Spirit is a Person, that He has attributes of deity and the Scriptures call Him God and yet as we have seen, there is only one God (Deut. 6:4).

So we have demonstrated that the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit all have personhood, attributes of deity and they are all called God in the Scriptures.

So here we have the Bible explicitly stating that there is only one God (Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 44:6, 8; 45:5) and yet we read that the same Bible calls the Father God, Jesus Christ God and the Holy Spirit God.

Pulling it All Together

There are more than 60 passages in Scripture that mention the three Persons of the Trinity together. This is an overwhelming amount of Bible verses considering that God will not share His glory with anyone else (Isaiah 42:8; 48:11).

Here are examples of Scripture that mention the three together:

- Matthew 28:19, 20 says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them *in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit*, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
 - First, note that the word *name* [Greek: *onoma*] is singular. Matthew did not say "...baptizing them in the *names* of the Father..."
 - Second, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are invoked as three equal Persons. The Son manifests omnipresence and omniscience by promising to be with all believers at all times in all places throughout this age.
- Matthew 3:16, 17 says, "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"
- 2 Corinthians 13:14 says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."
 - As Dr. Robert Morey correctly points out, "Paul's prayer indicates that he was praying equally to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...to give all believers everywhere at all times and places grace, love, and fellowship."²⁶
- Ephesians 4:4-6 says, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God the Father of all, who is above all, and through all. And in you all."

- See also John 3:34,35; 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15; Romans 14:17; 18; 15:13-17; Romans 15:30; 1 Corinthians 6:11, 17-19; 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22; 3:4-6; Galatians 2:21-3:2; 4:6; Ephesians 2:18; 3:11-17; 5:18-20; Colossians 1:6-8; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5; 4:2, 8; 5:18, 19; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 3:23, 24; 4:13, 14; Jude 20, 21.

Not only do we have more than 60 Bible verses that mention all three together making *A Case For The Trinity*, but we also have Bible verses that give *divine attributes* to all three of the Godhead.

Who created all things?

- The Father – Psalm 100:3 says, “Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us.”
- The Son – Colossians 1:16 says, “For by Him [Jesus] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth...”
- The Holy Spirit – Psalm 104:30 says, “You sent forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.”

Who is omniscient (knows all things)?

- The Father – 1 John 3:20 says, “God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things.”
- The Son - John 21:17 says, “And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’”
- The Holy Spirit – 1 Corinthians 2:11 says, “Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.”

Who is omnipresent (everywhere at once)?

- The Father – Jeremiah 23:24 says, “‘Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?’ says the LORD; ‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’ says the LORD”
- The Son – Matthew 18:20 says, “For where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

- The Holy Spirit – Psalm 139:7 says, “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?”

Who is omnipotent (all powerful)?

- The Father – Jeremiah 32:17 says, “Ah, LORD God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.”
- The Son – Colossians 2:10 says, “and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”
- The Holy Spirit – Romans 15:19 says, “in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God...”

It just goes on and on. When we look at the whole panoply of Scripture we see over and over again that the same Divine attributes that only deity can have are ascribed to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Verses Others use to Deny the Trinity

1. Deuteronomy 6:4 says, “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!”

Ironically, one of the verses used to defend the Biblical concept of the Trinity is used by cults to deny the teaching of the Trinity.

Jehovah’s Witnesses will say that “The *Shema* excludes the Trinity of the Christian creed as a violation of the unity of God.”²⁷

Oneness Pentecostals will say that the doctrine of the Trinity “violates the *Shema*” and “denies...the sole and supreme Deity of Jesus.”²⁸

Biblical Teaching

The *Shema* does not deny the Trinity but rather, as we have seen earlier, is the First of Three foundations (i.e., There is only One God), reinforcing the definition of the Trinity.

When we understand and apply the *basic interpretive principle* that *Scripture interprets Scripture*, we can see the three persons of the Trinity when we see that the *Father* is called God (1 Peter 1:2), the Son is called God (John 20:28), and the Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5:3, 4).

And as we have seen earlier, we can see that the three persons of the Trinity each possess *divine attributes* such as *omniscience* (1 John 3:20, John 21:17, 1 Corinthians 2:11), *omnipotence* (Jeremiah 32:17, Matthew 18:20, Romans 15:19), and *omnipresence* (Jeremiah 23:24, Matthew 18:20, Psalm 139:7).

- 2. Isaiah 9:6 says, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulders. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, *Mighty God*, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."**

Jehovah's Witnesses will admit that Jesus is 'a god' but deny that He is 'the Almighty God.'

Jehovah's Witnesses argue that "to call Jehovah God 'Almighty' would have little significance unless there existed others who were also called gods but who occupied a lesser or inferior position."²⁹

Biblical Teaching

The reasoning that because Jesus is called a 'Mighty God' and that it means that He 'occupied a lesser or inferior position' doesn't hold up when you turn one chapter to the right to Isaiah 10:21.

In Isaiah 10:21, Jehovah is called the 'Mighty God.'

Does this mean that the Father 'occupies a lesser or inferior position' to yet another God since He's called Mighty in this verse?

An excellent cross-reference is in Isaiah 40:3 where Jesus is called both God (*Elohim*) and *Jehovah* (*Yahweh*).

- "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD (*Yahweh*); Make straight in the desert a highway for our God (*Elohim*).'"
- John the Baptist uses Isaiah 40:3 to emphasize the prophecy of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 3:3.

3. John 10:30 says, "I and My Father are one."

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that this verse does not mean that Jesus and the Father are one in *essence* or *nature* but that Jesus was saying they were one in *agreement, purpose, and organization*.³⁰

Biblical Teaching

We know by the context of the passage that when the Jews heard what Jesus was saying, they knew He wasn't saying that He was "one in purpose" with God because they themselves thought that they were "one in purpose" with God.

By looking at the context, we can see that according to the next two verses (i.e., John 10:31, 32), the Jews picked up stones to stone Jesus and why?

- John 10:32 says, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy and because You, being a Man, *make Yourself God*." (emphasis added)

The Jews knew Jesus was claiming to be God, not that He was claiming "one in agreement, purpose, and organization" with God.

Oneness Pentecostals, when denying the doctrine of the Trinity, will point to John 10:30 and say that Jesus was claiming to be the Father.

Biblical Teaching

Once again, when we look at the whole panoply of scripture and apply the *basic interpretive principle* that *Scripture interprets Scripture*, we

can easily demonstrate that the Father and the Son are separate and distinct persons.

- The Father sent the Son according to John 3:16-17.
- The Father and the Son love one another according to John 3:35; 5:20; 14:31.
- The Father and Son glorify each other according to John 17:1,4,5
- The Father and the Son speak to one another according to John 11:41-42.
- The Father knows the Son and the Son knows the Father according to John 7:29; 8:55; 10:15.

4. 1 Corinthians 14:33 says, "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."

Jehovah's Witnesses will argue that the doctrine of the Trinity is too unreasonable; too confusing that it cannot possibly be true because "God is not the author of confusion."

- In the Watchtower book, *Let God Be True*, we read of the Trinity, "To excuse it with the word 'Mystery!' is not satisfying. If one has in mind the apostle's words, 'God is not the author of confusion'...it is at once seen that such a doctrine is not of God."³¹

Biblical Teaching

We need to keep in mind that just because someone cannot comprehend something about God is not a sound reason for rejecting it.

God is above our understanding and our comprehension.

Remember that if God was small enough for us to understand, He would not be big enough to be God.

- Job 11:7 says, "Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?"
- Psalm 139:6 says, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it."
- Isaiah 55:8-9 says, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the LORD. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'"
- Romans 11:33 says, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out!"
- 1 Corinthians 13:12 says, "Now we see but a poor reflection; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

Why should it come as a surprise that we cannot fully understand God whose thoughts and ways are "higher than the earth" and "His paths beyond tracing out?"

Conclusion

The bottom line is that when we let the Bible set our theology instead of force-feeding or enforcing our pre-conceived ideas on the Bible, we can see that when the Bible is taken as a whole, it effectively demonstrates the Trinity of the Godhead.

We call letting the Bible set our theology by understanding what the author had in mind, *exegesis* and when we read into the Bible text something that simply isn't there, it's called *eisegesis*.

We always want to let the Bible speak for itself and we do that by reading the whole panoply of Scripture and apply the *basic interpretive principle* that *Scripture interprets Scripture*.

When we let the Bible speak for itself, we see that the Trinity is not only a Biblical concept; it is how God shows Himself to us.

From Old Testament to New, the God of the Bible consistently demonstrates that He is Triune and when we understand the Trinity, we understand that God has revealed Himself to us in a way that we may worship Him "in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)

Resources used and recommended reading material:

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2. *The Forgotten Trinity*, James R. White, Bethany House, ISBN: 1556617259
3. *Knowing the Truth About the Trinity*, John Ankerberg and John Weldon, Harvest House, ISBN: 1565075870
4. *The Great Doctrines of the Bible*, William Evans, Moody Bible Institute, ISBN: 0802430961
5. *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity – An Answer to Jehovah’s Witnesses*, Robert M. Bowman, Jr., Baker Book House, ISBN: 0801009812
6. *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah’s Witnesses*, Ron Rhodes, Harvest House Publishers, ISBN: 1565071069
7. *Systematic Theology: Volume Two*, Dr. Norman L. Giesler, Bethany House Publications, ISBN: 0764225529
8. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Dr. Norman L. Giesler, Baker Books House, ISBN: 0801021510

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to email Robby Beum at robby@calvaryaurora.org

Notes

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11. Dr. Norman L. Giesler, *Systematic Theology: Volume Two* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2003) p. 291
12. Robert Morey, *The Trinity: Evidence and Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: World Publishing, 1996), p. 88
13. Ibid. p. 95
14. Ibid. p. 97
15. Ibid. p. 97
16. Dr. Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2000), p. 353.
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18. Ibid. p. 171
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21. James R. White, *The Forgotten Trinity* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1998), p. 26.
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23. Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1993), p. 195.
24. Ibid. p. 195
25. Dr John MacArthur, *New Testament Commentary on Acts 1-12* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994), p. 154.
26. Robert Morey, *The Trinity, Evidence and Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: World Publishing, Inc. 1996), p. 446.
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29. Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Why You Should Believe in the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), p. 97.
30. Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah's Witnesses* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1993), p. 246.
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